



Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force: Intra-Agency Coordination of High-Cost Universal Service Fund Reverse Auctions

**Michael Janson, Director
Kirk Burgee & Jonathan McCormack, Deputy Directors
Audra Hale-Maddox, Chief of Staff**



FCC Open Meeting – January 13, 2021

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a close-up of wheat stalks with green leaves and golden-brown heads.

Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force (RBATF)

- Established in 2017 to oversee use of competitive bidding to allocate USF high-cost support to unserved & underserved areas
- Has administered / overseen:
 - **CAF Phase II** (Auction 903),
 - **Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase I** (Auction 904),
 - Mobile High-Cost Support Reform and Establishment of the **5G Fund for Rural America**
- Coordination has involved nearly 100 staff across multiple Bureaus / Offices, including:
 - WCB, OEA, WTB, IB, EB, MB, CGB, OET, OCBO, OLA, and OGC

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CAF Phase II (Auction 903)

- First multiple-round, reverse auction to award high-cost USF ongoing support to deploy fixed broadband service to unserved areas.
- Innovative use of weighted tiers encouraged participation from a range of companies and technologies
- Bidding completed in August 2018
 - Awarded **\$1.48 billion** to **103 winning bidders** to serve over **700,000** locations in **45 states**
 - **99.75%** of support awarded to provide speeds of **25 / 3 Mbps** or higher
- As of January 2021, 99% of support has been authorized



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Wind River Internet, a tribally owned provider, was awarded \$4.1 million in CAF-II/Auction 903 to bring broadband to more than 800 homes and businesses on Wind River Reservation in rural Wyoming

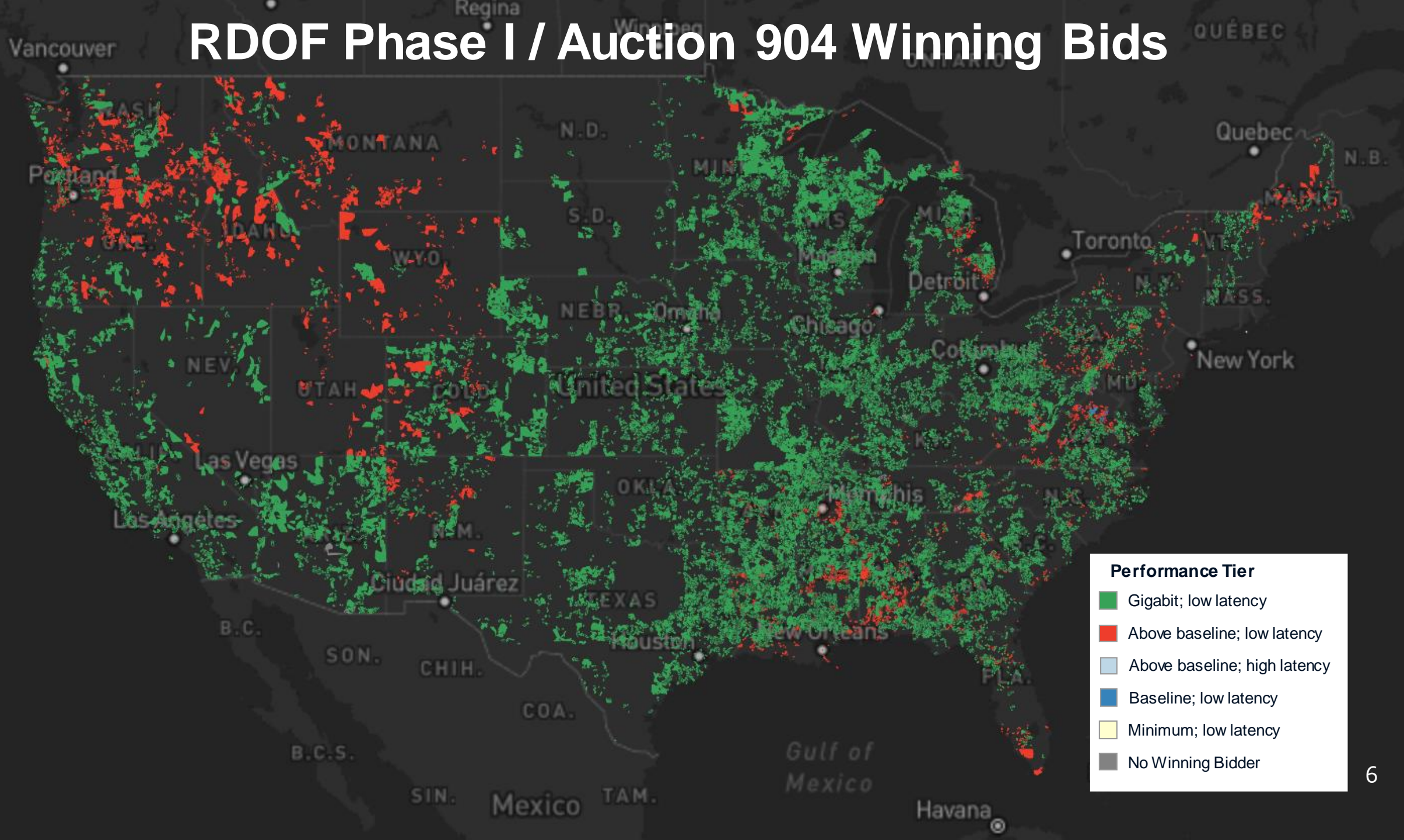


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Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Phase I (Auction 904)

- Built on successful CAF Phase II / Auction 903 model
- Similar to Auction 903, weighted tiers encouraged participation of companies using different technologies
 - Advantage given to bidders offering higher speeds and lower latencies
- Bidding completed on November 25, 2020
 - Awarded **\$9.23 billion** to **180 winning bidders** to serve **5.2 million** unserved locations in 49 states and one territory for fixed broadband and voice services
 - **99.7%** of support awarded to locations to provide speeds of **100 / 20 Mbps** or higher, with **84.8%** to locations for gigabit broadband

RDOF Phase I / Auction 904 Winning Bids





Mobile High-Cost Support Reform

- **Mobility Fund Phase II Challenge Process (2018)**
 - Developed online portal to validate, accept, and process mobile speed tests challenging the accuracy of carrier-submitted mobile 4G LTE coverage maps
 - Accepted **20.7 million** speed tests from **24 challengers** across **38 states**
- **Mobility Fund Phase II Investigation Staff Report (2019)**
 - Field agents conducted **25,000** speed tests driving over **10,000 miles**
 - Investigation found that mobile coverage was overstated by multiple carriers
- **5G Fund for Rural America (2020)**
 - **5G Fund for Rural America** adopted to replace Mobility Fund Phase II
 - Two-phase multi-round reverse auction approach
 - Total budget of **\$9 billion** to award support to deploy 5G services
 - Adopted public interest obligations for legacy high-cost support beginning January 1, 2021



5G Fund Phase I and Phase II

- **5G Fund Phase I:**
 - Up to \$8 billion over 10 years
 - Support to deploy mobile 5G service
 - Areas eligible for support based upon mobile coverage data collected through Digital Opportunity Data Collection
- **5G Fund Phase II:**
 - Auction budget will be \$1 billion + remainder of Phase I budget
 - Support for network deployments that facilitate precision agriculture
 - Will include any eligible areas that went unsold in the Phase I auction